

Appeal In The Matter Of Department Permits L-24572-24-C-N, L-24572-TF-D-N, L-24572-IW-E-N, L-24572-24-F-N and L 24572-TF-G-N // Approval for Oakfield Wind Project Expansion

- Licensee Exhibit F

October 27, 2011 E-mail from James Palmer to Jessica Damon

**Browne, Juliet**

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**To:** Browne, Juliet  
**Subject:** FW: FW: Comments on Oakfield Expansion

> From: James F. Palmer [mailto:palmer.jf@gmail.com]  
 > Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2011 12:07 PM  
 > To: Damon, Jessica; Jim Palmer  
 > Subject: Re: FW: Comments on Oakfield Expansion  
 >  
 > Jessica,  
 >  
 > I have attached a PDF of Lynne Williams' Intervenor Comments with my  
 > comments added. In general, her critique does not seem to me to have  
 > substance. However, I do agree with her that it would have been  
 > desirable to have a survey of the Oakfield Wind Project's affect on  
 > water-based users. It was my understanding that a survey was  
 > conducted,  
 > but I have not seen it yet. Much of Lynne critique can be better  
 > addressed if the survey is included in the record.  
 >  
 > My major comments are:  
 >  
 > 1. I'm not sure why we have not seen a survey for Oakfield. It was my  
 > understanding that Market Decisions had been hired to do one in late  
 > August or early September.  
 >  
 > 2. The Bull Hill survey included hikers on Black Mountain, and people  
 > in  
 > the parking lot where people could hike to Schoodic Mtn or Donnell  
 > Pond.  
 >  
 > Respondents in the parking lot were asked about how the turbines would  
 > affect their use of water-based activities.  
 >  
 > 3. It is irrelevant that Mattawamkeag Lake is an 1A lake, and Pleasant  
 > Lake is 1B. The scenic value of both lakes is "significant," not  
 > "outstanding." Among the state's scenic resources of state or national  
 > significance (SRSNS), they are toward the lower end.  
 >  
 > 4. Neither of these lakes should be considered "remote." They have  
 > road  
 > access, boat launches, and residential development.  
 >  
 > 5. Lynne offers no evidence in the record that any wind development  
 > project in Maine has had a significant affect on recreation use. The  
 > surveys conducted for wind projects so far have indicated that there  
 > will be little to no affect on recreation use or experience. During  
 > the  
 > study of recreation use of Baskahegan Lake, no one mentioned the  
 > highly  
 > visible turbines (Stetson Wind as I remember).  
 >

> 6. Lynne correctly states that the tree canopy is not tall enough to  
 > screen all views of the turbines. However, the Wind Energy Act states:  
 > "A finding by the primary siting authority that the development's  
 > generating facilities are a highly visible feature in the landscape is  
 > not a solely sufficient basis for determination that an expedited wind  
 > energy project has an unreasonable adverse effect on the scenic  
 > character and existing uses related to scenic character of a scenic  
 > resource of state or national significance." (Sec. 3452(3))  
 >  
 > 7. No evidence is offered in the record that the turbines are more  
 > obtrusive in the landscape than they appear in the photosimulations. A  
 > photo of the Rollins Wind Project and the simulation was entered into  
 > the record as part of the Bowers Wind Project hearings before LURC.  
 The  
 > Commission seemed to think that the simulations and photo were  
 > reasonably similar. This is an issue that does not have substantial  
 > research.  
 >  
 > 8. In Attachment B, Lynne asserts that the Bull Hill survey "is  
 neither  
 > valid nor reliable," but she does not present any evidence to support  
 > this assertion. She refers to a Bangor Daily News disclaimer, but does  
 > not provide a citation so that I could track down how their poll was  
 > conducted.  
 >  
 > Actually, I have looked at the reliability and validity of all of the  
 > wind project surveys conducted so far in Maine. The group reliability  
 > for the Bull Hill survey is .987 for the Black Mtn responses, and .952  
 > for the Donnell Pond responses. This is VERY high.  
 >  
 > The validity of using the Black Mountain photograph, but not the  
 Donnell  
 >  
 > Pond photo was evaluated. The difference in the ratings of the actual  
 > view and a photo had a small effect size (-0.335) and it was not  
 > statistically significant ( $t = -1.492$ ,  $df = 26$ ,  $p = 0.148$ ).  
 >  
 > These results come from my analysis of the surveys that have been  
 > conducted to date. I do not believe that this paper has been entered  
 > into the record.  
 >  
 > 9. Lynne states that "characteristics of the hikers who agreed to be  
 > interviewed could be very different from those who refused to be  
 > interviewed." There is no evidence that there was significant  
 respondent  
 >  
 > bias. 105 adults (children cannot participate) were observed and 81  
 > interviews were completed.  
 >  
 > 10. Lynne presents BPL's concern that "an independent professional  
 > review of the [Bull Hill] survey instrument to determine if it  
 > introduces any particular bias to the results." I was that qualified  
 > professional.  
 >  
 > 11. Lynne also presents BPL's concern that "the [Bull Hill] survey may  
 > not be representative of the range of users, that there are  
 differences

486  
> between back-country hikers and day hikers, weekday users may differ  
> from weekend users, and both may differ from holiday users." The  
survey  
> was conducted over the Columbus Day weekend--it is late in the summer  
> season and did not include mid-week users. I agree that the sampled  
days  
>  
> should be more spread out through the year. However, neither DEP or  
LURC  
>  
> have established a protocol for conducting user surveys (as they have  
> for bird and bat studies, or noise studies).  
>  
>  
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>  
>  
>  
>> There are some concerns relating to visual impacts. Let me know what  
> you  
>> think.  
>>  
>> Jessica M. Damon  
>>  
>> Environmental Specialist III  
>>  
>> Division of Land Resource Regulation  
>>  
>> Bureau of Land& Water Quality  
>>  
>> (207) 446-1216  
>>  
>>  
>>  
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>>  
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>> \*From:\* Lynne Williams [mailto:lwil@earthlink.net]  
>> \*Sent:\* Wednesday, October 26, 2011 2:13 PM  
>> \*To:\* Damon, Jessica  
>> \*Subject:\* Comments on Oakfield Expansion  
>>  
>> Hello Jessica: Attached please find my comments, on behalf of my  
>> clients, on the Oakfield Expansion application.  
>>  
>> Regards, Lynne Williams  
>>  
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